

February 19, 2008

Exit Strategy

You've held on as long as possible. But with New York City real estate prices seemingly immune to the national housing slump, and that whole ongoing school admissions rigmarole, it's time to bid your beloved city adieu. Now what?



THE
SUBURBAN
JUNGLE

The Suburban Jungle Realty Group can streamline your housing search so you're not left wandering aimlessly through various postal zones. They've got a network of NYC-based consultants, local realtors and town bloggers (and a fabulously informative web site) to help educate you on the lay of the land. Suburban Jungle founder Alison Bernstein lists factors to consider and offers advice on choosing the right burb for your brood:

First Impressions: Hang out for an afternoon to get a feel for the town and the people. Have lunch, visit a play space or sample a kids' music class.

School Daze: Stats and test scores don't tell the whole story. Tour the local schools to get an idea of the *current* class size, curriculum, facilities (are there trailers on the property to compensate for overcrowded classrooms?) student and parent bodies.

SAHM or WOHM: Because of the longer commutes, towns far away from the city tend to have more stay-at-home moms.

On the Road Again: There's a big difference between a 30- and a 60-minute commute. Is there a direct train? Is there adequate parking at the train station?

Zoning Regulations: How would you like to wait two years to build that pool you've always dreamed of? Be aware of local building codes, and zoning regulations and procedures.

The Obvious: Property taxes (Westchester high, many Connecticut towns low), house style and yard size.

Look on the bright side: You won't have to tip all those doormen next Christmas.